

Message Text

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QUOTE

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USIAC

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SUBJ: AP INTERVIEW WITH PM ECEVIT, SEPT 5, 1974

FOLLOWING IS THE COMPLETE TEXT OF AN INTERVIEW OF PRIME MINISTER
BULENT ECEVIT BY AP CORRESPONDENT NICHOLAS LUDINGTON, CONDUCTED
SEPTEMBER 5, 1974. LUDINGTON HAS FILED SEVERAL STORIES BASED ON
THIS INTERVIEW, BUT IS HOLDING THE MATERIAL ON TURKEY'S RETURN
TO THE PLANTING OF OPIUM POPPY FOR A LATER SERIES ON THE SUBJECT.
ADDRESSEES ARE ASKED TO RESPECT THIS INFORMAL EMBARGO.
INTERVIEW WITH PRIME MINISTER BULENT ECEVIT, SEPT 5, 1974:

Q. DO THE CURRENT REPORTS OF FIGHTING ON CYPRUS MEAN THERE
IS A THIRD TURKISH MILITARY OPERATION UNDER WAY?

A. NO. THERE IS NO THIRD MILITARY OPERATION UNDER WAY.
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NOW OUR MAIN CONCERN IS THE SECURITY OF THE TURKS RESIDING
IN THE GREEK SECTOR, MOST OF WHO ARE INTERNEES OR
HOSTAGES. WE DON'T KNOW THE WHEREABOUTS OF SOME OF
THE TURKS IN THAT AREA. AS YOU KNOW EVERY DAY NEW AND

UNFORTUNATE DISCOVERIES ARE MADE OF MASSACRES POINTED AGAINST THE TURKS, TURKISH VILLAGES PARTICULARLY. THIS IS OUR MAIN CONCERN. SOME EFFECTIVE MEASURES HAVE TO BE TAKEN TO PUT AN END TO THESE. WHAT WE HAVE IN MIND IS THAT THESE TURKS WHO LIVE OUTSIDE THE TURKISH-CONTROLLED AREA SHOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF COMING TO THE TURKISH CONTROLLED AREA IF THEY SO WISH. THIS WOULD SETTLE THE MATTER FOR GOOD, CALM OUR ANXIETIES AND ENABLE US TO BEGIN THE PHASED REDUCTION OF FORCES.

Q. IF THERE ARE NO NEGOTIATIONS AND TENSION OR MASSACRES CONTINUE ON THE ISLAND HOW LONG ARE YOU PREPARED TO WAIT BEFORE YOU DO SOMETHING TO GET THOSE TURKS OUT?

A. WE STILL HOPE AND EXPECT THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE FORCE CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, AT LEAST PROVIDE SAFE PASSAGE FOR THOSE TURKS WHOSE SECURITY THEY CANNOT GUARANTEE OR CONTROL.

Q. WOULD IT BE AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN FOR TURKISH FORCES TO PROVIDE SAFE PASSAGE FOR THOSE PEOPLE IF NECESSARY?

A.: IF THAT COULD BE PROVIDED FOR, WE WOULD APPRECIATE IT. I HOPE THAT WE CAN SETTLE THIS PURELY HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM IN A PEACEFUL WAY. BUT WE HAVE TO FIND A SOLUTION. AFTER ALL EVEN GREEKS ARE NOT SAFE IN THE HANDS OF THE GREEKS ON THE ISLAND. SOME FACTIONS ARE FIGHTING EACH OTHER. THERE IS NO EFFECTIVE CONTROL, ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL IN THAT AREA AND YOU MUST HAVE NOTICED THAT TURKISH PUBLIC OPINION IS GRAVELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE FATE OF THE TURKS.

Q: IS THIS A MATTER OF DAYS FOR YOU, WEEKS OR MONTHS IN TERMS OF WAITING TO TAKE ACTION?

A: IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW DISCOVERIES I WANT TO DISCUSS
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THE MATTER WITH OUR FOREIGN MINISTER WHEN HE COMES BACK. AND WE SHALL DECIDE IN DETAIL WHAT LINE WE SHALL TAKE. OF COURSE IT SHOULD BE AN URGENT MEASURE. WE STILL CHERISH THE HOPE THAT THE UNITED NATIONS WILL FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS PROBLEM. AFTER ALL, IT IS TO SOME EXTENT AT LEAST THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THOSE WHO HAVE CRITICIZED TURKEY FOR HER SECOND MILITARY ACTION TO SEE TO IT THAT THIS MATTER IS SETTLE IN A PEACEFUL WAY.

Q: IN AN INDEPENDENT TURKISH CYPRIOT STATE A POSSIBILITY IN TURKEY'S VIEW, MR. DENKTASH HAS MENTIONED THIS?

A: AS FAR AS I KNOW WHAT MR. DENKTASH MEANT IS THIS, WHICH I ALSO HAVE SAID ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS: IF THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE DEALYED BEYOND A REASONABLE TIME, LIFE ON THE ISLAND CANNOT WAIT INDEFINITELY AND ADMINISTRATIONS IN BOTH ZONES WOULD HAVE TO TAKE SHAPE AND BE CONSOLIDATED SO THAT EVENTUALLY THERE WOULD BE NO ROOM LEFT FOR A FEDERAL ROOF TO JOIN THESE TWO AUTONOMOUS ADMINISTRATIONS. THIS IS THE MAJOR DISADVANTAGE OF THE DELAYING TACTIC. MAYBE THIS IS WHAT THE GREEKS HAVE IN MIND. IT IS NOT OUR OBJECTIVE. WE HAVE BEEN REFERRING TO IT AS A POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCE OR EVEN POSSIBLY INEVITABLE CONSEQUENCE OF REFRAINING FROM RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS. WE HAVE THE FEELING THAT THIS MAY BE THE INTENTION OF GREECE. THEY MAY HAVE IN MIND THE ANNEXATION OF THE REMAINING PART OF CYPRUS TO GREECE. THEY MAY INTEND TO MAKE THIS INEVITABLE AND THIS MAY BE THE IDEA BEHIND THEIR TACTICS.

Q: WHAT WOULD TURKEY'S REACTION BE TO ANNOUNCEMENT OF ENOSIS?

A: THAT WOULD RENDER PARTITION OF THE ISLAND INEVITABLE, WHICH IS NOT THE THING THAT WE WANT. WE DON'T WANT IT FOR TWO MAJOR REASONS. FIRSTLY WE SINCERELY BELIEVE THAT INDEPENDENCE OF CYPRUS IS NECESSARY FOR DETENTE IN OUR AREA AND SECONDLY WE DON'T WANT TO SEE GREECE COME SO NEAR TURKEY IN OUR SOUTH AS WELL. WE HAVE ENOUGH TROUBLE ON OUR WEST. FOR THESE REASONS WE DON'T WANT THIS TO HAPPEN BUT THIS MAY BE THE INEVITABLE RESULT OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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THE GREEK ATTITUDE.

Q: WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE AN INDEPENDENT TURKISH CYPRIOT STATE EVEN AFTER THE GREEK PART OF THE ISLAND WAS ANNEXED TO GREECE?

A: WE HAVEN'T COME TO THE STAGE OF THINKING ABOUT THAT YET.

Q: WHICH WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO YOU?

A: WELL NOW WE ARE DWELLING UPON WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY PREFERABLE TO US, THAT IS RETAINING CYPRUS AS AN INDEPENDENT STATE. THAT IS THE ONLY REASON WE WANT TO SEE THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE RESUMED.

Q: IF THE TURKISH CYPRIOTS, UNDER THE PRINCIPLES OF SELF-DETERMINATION VOTED TO JOIN TURKEY WOULD TURKEY REFUSE TO HAVE THEM?

A: THESE ARE HYPOTHESES. EVERYONE HAS NOTICED THAT SINCE

THE ERUPTION OF THE CYPRUS ISSUE IN JULY THIS YEAR WE HAVE SHOWN UTMOST CARE NOT TO HARM THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE BIG POWERS AND THE BALANCE IN GENERAL IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN. WE FEEL THAT THE INDEPENDENCE OF CYPRUS WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THAT BALANCE AND IT IS A DESIREABLE THING TO RETAIN FOR THAT PURPOSE. WE HAVEN'T COME YET T THE STAGE OF THINKING OF OTHER ALTERNATIVES IN CASE THE INDEPENDENCE OF CYPRUS CANNOT BE MAINTAINED.

Q: IS THERE TRUTH IN THE CHARGES THAT TURKEY IS SENDING A LARGE NUMBER OF MAINLAND TURKS TO THE ISLAND IN ORDER TO SWELL THE POPULATON OF THE TURKISH-CONTROLLED AREA?

A: NO WE HAVEN'T THOUGHT ABOUT THAT UP TO NOW. WE HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO DEVISE SUCH POLICIES IN DETAIL. WHAT WE ARE MAINLY CONCERNED WITH NOW IS THAT THE TURKS IN THE REMAINING PART OF THE ISLAND SHOULD HAVE A CHANCE TO SETTLE IN THE TURKISH-CONTROLLED ZONE IF THEY WISH. WE HAVE BEEN SENDING TEMPORARILY SOME PEOPLE TO HELP START THE ECONOMY OF THE NORTHERN PART OF THE ISLAND. THAT IS ALL.

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Q: YOU MENTIONED IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE NEW YORK TIMES THAT TURKEY WOULD BE READY TO FILL ANY GAPS LEFT BY THE GREEK MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO. WHEN YOU SAID THAT WHAT SPECIFICS DID YOU HAVE IN MIND?

A: I ALSO SAID THAT WITHDRAWAL OF GREECE FROM THE MILITARY STRUCTURE OF NATO, ALTHOUGH IT IS HIGHLY UNDESIREABLE, FROM BOTH NATO'S POINT OF VIEW IN GENERAL AND FROM TURKEY'S POINT OF VIEW IN PARTICULAR, WOULD NOT CHANGE THE DE FACTO SITUATION VERY MUCH. ALTHOUGH BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN FULL MEMBERS OF NATO FOR QUITE A FEW YEARS, COOPERATION BETWEEN TURKEY AND GREECE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF NATO HAD CEASED TO FUNCTION. THIS WAS A MAJOR HANDICAP FOR THE NORMAL FUNCTIONING OF THE SOUTHEASTERN FLANK OF NATO. IN FACT THIS, AS FAR AS I KNOW, HAS HAMPERED MANY OF THE NATO EXERCIZES IN THE AREA. NOW IF GREECE INSISTS ON WITHDRAWING FROM THE MILITARY STRUCTURE OF NATO WE CAN TAKE OVER THE RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE AEGEAN AS MIGHT FALL TO TURKEY TO COMPENSATE FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF GREECE. IN ANY CAE SINCE THE MECHANISM OF COOPERATION HAS NOT BEEN FUNCTIONING. ALTHOUGH THEORETICALLY GREECE HAS BEEN IN THE MILITARY STRUCTURE OF NATO THERE HAS BEEN A VACUUM ALREADY. BUT IF THE GREEK POSITION BECOMES CLEAR AND THEY OPENLY WITHDRAW FROM THE MILITARY STRUCTURE OF NATOTHEN AT LEAST EVERYBODY CAN DECIDE ABOUT THE NATO EXERCIZES, THE SECURITY MEASURES TO BE TAKEN EFFECTIVELY IN THE AEGEAN AREA IN A DIFERENT LIGHT. I HAVEN'T IN MIND ANY DETAILS. THE DETAILS WOULD HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED

WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF NATO.

Q: WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT OF A CUTOFF OF AMERICAN
MILITARY AID TO TURKEY ON TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS?

A: THIS IS A MATTER BEING DEBATED IN AMERICA NOW. I
WOULDN'T LIKE TO COMMENT ON IT. BUT ON A DIFFERENT
OCCASION ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO I HAD SAID THAT CERTAIN
DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE SENATE OR CONGRESS OF AMERICA WOULD
NOT CHANGE THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY.
I WOULD STILL REPEAT THAT.

Q: THEN IT WOULD PROPER TO SAY THAT TURKEY'S STATED AIM
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OF PROTECTING TURKISH CYPRIOTS AND NOT WITHDRAWING TROOPS
UNTIL THAT IS DONE WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY AN AMERICAN
DECISION?

A: AFTER ALL WE ARE COMMITTED AND WE INTEND TO ABIDE BY
THE GENEVA AGREEMENT OF THE 20TH OF JULY. IT IS AN
INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT ENACTED UNDER THE MANDATE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL UNDER WHAT WE HAVE
ACCEPTED THE PHASED REDUCTION OF OUR FORCES IN CYPRUS
WHEN SUCH CONDITIONS AS STIPULATED IN THE AGREEMENT COME
ABOUT. WE DON'T INTEND TO KEEP OUR FORCES THERE INDEFINITELY.

Q: HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT UNITED STATES BEHAVIOR IN THE
OPIUM ISSUE?

A: THE UNITED STATES HAS OPENLY, FRANKLY STRESSED HER
ANXIETIES, HER CONCERNS ON THIS MATTER WHICH WE FULLY
UNDERSTAND AND RESPECT. WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHALL BE ABLE
TO CONTROL THE ILLEGAL TRAFFIC OF OPIUM IN TURKEY BY
INITIATING AN EFFECTIVE CONTROL SYSTEM IN THE FIELDS.
IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO CONTROL IT IN THE PORTS; BUT
WE BELIEVE THAT WITH AN EFFECTIVE MECHANISM WE SHALL BE
ABLE TO DEPEND UPON THE COOPERATION OF THE PEASANTS WHO
ARE NOT THE PEOPLE WHO BENEFIT FROM THE ILLEGAL TRAFFIC
IN OPIUM. WE HAVE ALREADY DEVISED A CONTROL MECHANISM.
THE POPPY GROWERS WILL BE LICENSED. IT WILL NOT BE ALLOWED
ANYWHERE THE PEOPLE MAY DESIRE TO GROW OPIUM. IT WILL BE
CONCENTRATED IN CERTAIN AREAS IN THE PROVINCES WHERE IT
IS RE-PERMITTED. AND WE WELCOME ANY OUTSIDE ADVISE AND
TECHNICAL HELP TO MAKE THIS CONTROL MORE EFFECTIVE. IN
FACT WE HAVE QUITE A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE TRAINED
FOR THIS PURPOSE BOTH IN TURKEY AND THE UNITED STATES.
WE HAVE SOME EQUIPMENT FOR CONTROL FROM THE AIR AND
FROM THE GROUND. WE HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT WE CAN ALLAY
THE CONCERNS OF THE UNITED STATES ON THIS MATTER.

Q: ONE MEASURE SUGGESTED BY EXPERTS WOULD BE TO EXPORT THE
POPPIES WITHOUG INCISING THE PODS, SO THE OPIUM GUM WOULD
NEVER HIT THE MARKET HERE. THE PEASANT COULD GET HIS SEED
BECAUSE AFTER A CERTAIN TIME IF THE CUT IS NOT MADE THE
POPPY DRIES AND THE GUM WON'T FLOW. IS THIS ONE OF THE
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MEASURES UNDER CONSIDERATION?

A: I DON'T WANT TO TALK ON THE TECHNICALITIES. BUT WE
ARE OPEN TO CONSIDER ANY REASONABLE SUGGESTIONS.

Q: HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT UNITED STATES BEHAVIOR AT THE
TIME OF THE BAN AND ITS RELATIONSHIPS WITH TURKEY?

A: SOME OF THE REACTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES COULD HAVE
HURT THE FEELINGS OF PEOPLE IN TURKEY CAUSING COUNTER-
REACTIONS. BUT FORTUNATELY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
DID NOT EXPRESS THEIR CONCERN OVER THE ISSUES IN THE FORM
OF PRESSURE. ON THE OTHER HAND THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT,
OUR GOVERNMENT, HAS SEEN TO IT THAT THIS DOES NOT BECOME
AN EMOTIONAL NATIONALISTIC ISSUE. WE DIDN'T TAKE THIS
ISSUE IN ORDER TO CHALLENGE AN ALLY OF TURKEY. BUT
SIMPLY BECAUSE AS A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MEASURE WE HAD
TO TAKE THIS XSTEP TOGETHER WITH PREVENTIVE MEASURES.
SO IT HASN'T CAUSED A DETERIORATION, AS FAR AS TURKEY
IS CONCERNED IN TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

Q: HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS
COMPARED WITH THOSE DURING REGIMES IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING
YOURS?

A: I THINK THAT ON THE WHOLE TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS
ARE MUCH BETTER THAN UNTIL A FEW MONTHS AGO. THE PUBLIC
OPINION HAS APRECIATED THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE DURING THE
DISPUTES WE HAVE HAD WITH EACH OTHER AFTER THIS GOVERNMENT
IS FORMED. AS I SAID ON ALL SUCH ISSUES, AMERICA STATED
HER VIEWS, HER CONCERNS, HER WISHES OPENLY AND WE HAVE
DONE THE SAME AND TRIED TO REACH A RECONCILIATION. BUT
BOTH GOVERNMENTS HAVE TAKEN CARE TO SEE TO IT THAT NONE
OF THESE ISSUES BECOMES AN EMOTIONAL MATTER. HERE THE
ATTITUDE OF TURKISH PUBLIC OPINION IN GENERAL IN TURKEY
NOW IS INCOMPARABLY BETTER SUITED FOR CLOSER COOPERATION
AND FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN AMERICA AND TURKEY SINCE THE LAST
FEW MONTHS.

Q: WOULD THIS IMPROVEMENT BE SERIOUSLY DAMAGED BY A MOVE
SUCH AS THE CUTOFF OF MILITARY AID?
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A: IT WOULD OF COURSE HAVE EFFECTS ON TURKISH PUBLIC OPINION. BUT I WOULD CERTAINLY WISH THAT THINGS WOULD NOT COME TO THAT. I CAN SEE HOW RESPONSIBLY THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN ACTING ON THIS MATTER, THE RESTRAINT THAT THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION SHOWS AND I FEEL THAT THE NECESSITY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND TURKEY GOES DEEPER THAN THE ISSUE OF MILITARY AID. OF COURSE WE REGARD IT AS A TOKEN OF CONTINUING AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP FOR TURKEY. IT WOULD HAVE SOME EFFECTS ON PUBLIC OPINION. BUT WE WILL CERTAINLY DO OUR BEST TO SEE TO IT THAT THESE REACTIONS DO NOT REACH SUCH A DEGREE AS WOULD CREATE A NEGATIVE ATMOSPHERE AS FAR AS NATO OR TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS ARE CONCERNED.

Q: WHAT ARE THE CHANCES THAT TURKEY WILL HAVE EARLY ELECTIONS? I'VE HEARD YOU WOULD LIKE THIS?

A: THIS IS A PRACTICAL PROBLEM. I LOOK AT IT FROM A PRACTICAL ANGLE. WE CERTAINLY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE AN EARLY ELECTION. BUT PRACTICALLY IT IS VERY DIFFICULT. BECAUSE UNDER OUR CONSTITUTION, THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE THE MEANS OF GOING TO THE POLLS AT AN EARLY DATE. THE MECHANISM FOR EARLY ELECTIONS IS TOO COMPLICATED. IT WOULD HARDLY WORK. AND IT WOULD SEEM TO BE RATHER DIFFICULT TO HAVE A MAJORITY OF THE VOTES IN THE PARLIAMENT FOR A DECISION ON EARLY ELECTIONS. IT IS DESIREABLE FROM MY ANGLE BUT I SEE IT RATHER DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE.

BENSON

UNQUOTE. KISSINGER

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